

NEWS RELEASE

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For More Information, Contact:

Lynn M. Childs 334.353.4732

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ACJIC receives nearly \$1 Million federal grant for statewide Automated Victim Information system

Similar system now available in Jefferson County and Tuscaloosa counties

(BIRMINGHAM, Ala.)— In a press conference held today, Alabama Criminal Justice Information Center (ACJIC) Director Maury Mitchell and Alabama Attorney General Troy King announced that the state will receive nearly \$1 million in federal funds to implement an automated statewide crime victim information system.

The announcement, made in a joint press conference with the Alabama Administrative Office of Courts, also featured the unveiling of a similar victim notification system in Jefferson County (Ala.). According to Jefferson County Sheriff Mike Hale, this system, known as Victim Information and Notification Everyday (VINE), will lay the groundwork for what will be implemented statewide. The VINE system is currently being used by victims in Tuscaloosa County.

“No one chooses to become the victim of a crime, but crime victims and their families are left with the reality of what happened, and what is happening in the case of their offender, every day,” Mitchell said. “This funding will allow our state to create a simple way for crime victims statewide to decide what, when and how they choose to know about their offender’s status in our system of justice.”

Alabama was one of only eight states to be awarded this funding by the U.S. Department of Justice’s Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA). Alabama state agencies have begun making preparations for future implementation of the new system, known as Statewide Automated Victim Information and Notification (SAVIN). When it is implemented, SAVIN will provide victims and citizens with access to offender information and status 24 hours a day, through a toll-free phone line or over the Internet. In addition, victims may register to be automatically notified of a change in the offenders’ status, such as release, escape, transfer to another facility, death, or if they are arrested again.

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“It is particularly appropriate that we make this announcement in October, during National Domestic Violence Awareness Month,” said Attorney General King. “Domestic violence is a very personal crime that haunts victims, many of whom live in terror that the offender will come back to attack or kill them. With the SAVIN program, victims of all crimes, including domestic violence, will have ready access to knowledge that will help them to protect themselves. Law enforcement officials across our state welcome this much-needed tool that enhances our ability to serve crime victims. By linking all the victims’ service offices to one accessible point, every agency that serves victims will be improved.”

The State recently received notification that it has been approved to receive \$986,251 over a two-year period from BJA. The State is to provide \$493,126 in matching funds and in-kind services, which will be provided by participating state agencies including ACJIC, the Alabama Administrative Office of Courts, the Alabama Criminal Justice Information Center, the Alabama Crime Victims Compensation Commission, the Alabama Board of Pardons and Paroles, the Alabama Department of Corrections, and the Alabama Office of Prosecution Services. The Attorney General’s Office of Victim Assistance will manage the new statewide victim notification service, and the grant will be administered by ACJIC.

“The introduction of a victim notification system is a monumental day for victims of crime in the State of Alabama,” Alabama Supreme Court Chief Justice Drayton Nabers said. “This system is another tool victims can utilize in protecting themselves against repeat offenses, and the technology will notify the victim when the criminal offender is released from detention in jail or prison. This has proven to be a great tool for victims in other states and I am proud to partner with the Alabama Criminal Justice Information Center for working to make it a reality across Alabama.”

ACJIC is in the process of evaluating the booking systems of correctional facilities throughout Alabama, providing for access to statewide offender custody information. When fully implemented, the statewide system will connect booking system in jails and prisons across Alabama. ACJIC expects that the program will be available statewide within a year.

Located in Montgomery, Ala., ACJIC assists all agencies of Alabama’s criminal justice community by providing 24-hour per day, 7 day a week access to information through its information networks. Processing over 15 million transactions per month, the agency serves more than 900 law enforcement agencies throughout Alabama, and is the state’s criminal history repository for the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s National Crime Information Center.

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